

CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

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VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1820.

NO. 14.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you—JOHN xiii. 34.

FROM THE UNIVERSALIST MAGAZINE.

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THE SUBSTANCE OF A DISCOURSE, Delivered at the installation of the Rev. BARZILLAI STREETER to the pastoral charge of the First Universalist Church and Society in Salem, Aug. 9, 1820. By Rev. SEBASTIAN STREETER, of Portsmouth, N. H. brother to the pastor elect.

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity:"—1 Tim. iv. 12.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 50.

But in accomplishing this momentous work, invitations and warnings, promises and threatenings, are successfully used. To be an example in word or doctrine, the preacher should be cautious, lest in illustrating and enforcing 'the precious promises' of our God, he overlook the threatenings which are recorded for our profit. These, when timely and judiciously applied, have a salutary influence in arousing the attention of the careless, and checking the progress of the presumptuous in their unhappy career. They may incline the sinner to pause, to reflect, and, by comparing his course with "the path of the just which shineth more and more unto the perfect day," to embrace "the grace of God that bringeth salvation, and live soberly, righteously and godly in the present world." But on the other hand, the exemplary preacher should use still greater care, that he does not, in warning sinners, point them to *imaginary* instead of *real danger*; and in denouncing the threatenings of the law, obscure "the promises of the everlasting gospel." He will endeavour to impress upon the minds of his hearers the important truth, that "the law which was four hundred and thirty years after the covenant of promise, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." He will shun no labors which are necessary to convince them, that the grace pro-

mised and the chastisements threatened in the sacred volume, are designed to subserve the same benevolent purpose, to "make us partakers of holiness, produce the peaceable fruits of righteousness and reconcile us to God."

But 2d. It is not enough that the christian minister is "an example of the believers in word," that he promulgates and verbally defends the genuine doctrine of Christ, he must also be exemplary in conversation, in his general deportment, in his private walk, in his ordinary intercourse with his people and with the world. The general tenor of his conduct out of the desk will increase or diminish the influence of his labours in it, as it is discreet or imprudent. He spends comparatively but little time in the pulpit, and much out of it, and consequently more depends upon his social intercourse, than upon the strength of his mind or the persuasiveness of his eloquence. It will be vain to recommend sobriety on the sabbath, if rudeness characterize him through the week. It will be useless to preach unlimited benevolence; and indulge in all the rancor of malevolence. Who will give heed to the vociferations of the thief who recommends honesty, or the tipler who pronounces the panegyric of temperance. The influence of one hour of frivolous or vicious conversation cannot be counterbalanced by months of the soundest reasoning and the most engaging oratory. No, the christian minister must imitate his divine Master in "a conversation that becometh the gospel." He must teach by example as well as precept. Like a primitive follower of the Redeemer, he must "show his faith by his work." It will not be enough that he avoids overt acts of impiety and immorality, he must studiously shun even 'the appearance of evil.' His official station will introduce him into almost all the variety of scenes which human life presents, in all of which his deportment and conduct will have a peculiar influence. He should therefore strive

to show that the religion of Jesus is appropriate to all the periods, purposes, and vicissitudes of social life. It is his in a great degree, to cheer the drooping spirits of age; to regulate the volatility of youth; to bridle the tongue of the profane; and check the levity of the rude. It is his to impart fortitude to the afflicted by the influence of congenial sympathy; to tranquilize the soul of the dying pilgrim by the glories of Jesus and the resurrection; and to soothe the pangs of bereavement by pointing the heart to the great 'comforter of all that mourn.' In a word, he should exhibit on all occasions such a spirit and deportment as become those with whom he associates.

3. To be an example in charity is one of the most important and delightful privileges of the christian preacher. He should possess and exemplify it even in its various acceptations. 1. As importing the principle of christian love. His whole heart should be filled with the love of God, and the Redeemer, with love to man and the practical virtues of 'pure and undefiled religion.' 2. As signifying the exercise of candour and tenderness, in treating of the opinions and practices of those, who differ from him in sentiment. He will view error as a misfortune, not as a crime, and therefore speak of it with that spirit of candour and generosity, which flows from a deep conviction, that 'to err is human, to forgive divine.' The censorious preacher may confound without convincing, and by provoking the irritable defeat the object of his own exertions. But he that speaks of the opinions of an opponent with exemplary tenderness, will be heard with attention and probably with profit. The 'weapons of his warfare are not carnal,' and will therefore be 'mighty in pulling down the strong holds' of error and delusion. 3. Almsgiving is a very common acceptance of the word charity. In this also he will be 'an example of the believers.' His time will not be exhausted amid the honors of the great

and the feasts of the wealthy. He will set them a noble example by frequenting the unnoticed residence of the penniless and wretched; the time-shattered cottage of the lonely widow; and hearing the moving petitions of the naked and hungry orphans his heart and his hand will be opened. In these lorn abodes of want and of woe, he will light up a smile of comfort, and break to their famishing tenants 'the bread of life.' He will consider it 'more blessed to give than to receive;' but the pretended ambassador of Him, who gave himself a ransom for all, who has the means of help and covetously shuts the hand of charity ought to be despised. It is not supposable that he will have large sums to impart, but a little in the moment of pinching want will do much. Yes a little bestowed in the hour of pressing need, will give the exemplary preacher an influence over the heart, at which splendid talents may grasp in vain. 4. The faithful servant of Immanuel will be an example in spirit and in faith. He will use great care in the due government of his mind, in the discreet cultivation of his heart. He will habituate himself to a becoming equanimity of temper on all occasions. He will endeavour to exhibit to the world a sweetness of disposition, an evenness of mind worthy of general imitation. Humility, meekness, forbearance and forgiveness may always be seen in the train of his virtues. These glories will freshen and thicken around him. He will appear self-collected and unmoved amid the conflicts of the world and the reverses of fortune. When the tempests of persecution beat upon him; when 'the love of many waxes cold;' when his prospects grow gloomy; the clouds of adversity thicken, and tribulations multiply around him or his brethren, his hope will be unshaken, his faith in God and the Saviour will stand firm, gather strength by every new conflict, and bid defiance to the imbecility of 'the world and the evil that is in it.' He will show that his 'faith stands not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.' Manifesting the serenity of a quiet spirit, and the strength of an immoveable confidence in God, and in the glorious issue of the gospel of his Son, he will be an example of the believers in spirit and faith. 5. Purity closes

the list of exemplary virtues to which the thoughts and the practice of the christian preacher should be prayerfully devoted. Without this he will be worse than useless, with it he may be profitable in all things. He will strive to copy the holy Redeemer, to inculcate and exemplify the pure doctrine of his kingdom. He will 'set to his seal that God is true, and keep himself unspotted from the world.'—He will use every exertion to 'purify himself even as Christ is pure.' He will endeavour intelligibly to distinguish between the pure doctrine of the unity and perfections of God; the office of the Mediator; the leading sentiment of the gospel; and the practical piety and morality which are consequences of an operative faith in them.

Concluded in our next.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

BRIEF SKETCHES. No. VII.

Whatever might have been the errors of the theory of Priestly, it must be conceded, that he wrote with the intention of doing good, and that his life was a pattern of meekness and christian humility.

The next creed stigmatized as heretical, was that of Arminius in substance the same as that of Pelagius.

Arminius believed, that God has bestowed eternal life on those whom he has foreseen will persevere in the faith, and that he will punish with everlasting fire, those who continued in unbelief.

He further taught, that Christ atoned for the sins of men in general, and of every man in particular, but that only the believer can participate in the benefit of this atonement.

These tenets was condemned at the synod of Dort in 1618.

There is yet another denomination of men viewed as heretical, and we shall endeavour impartially to describe this belief, there are however, several divisions, all of them agreeing in the main point, but differing on some points.

John Rely and John Murray, preached that Jesus Christ, in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily, was offered up as a lamb led to the slaughter, that openeth not its mouth, that he died the just for the unjust, an ignominious death on the cross,

and thereby presented the whole family of man, pure and spotless to the eye of their heavenly Father; they furthermore taught that men and angels should be assembled before the awful tribunal of the Almighty Jehovah, that every mouth should stand guilty before God, but that man should by the blood of the everlasting covenant which washeth away sin, be received into that place of bliss which had been promised, whilst the angels who kept not their first estate should be punished in everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Elhanan Winchester taught that a millennium would take place on this earth, that at the destruction of the world the wicked would be punished in material fire and brimstone; he disbelieved the eternity of hell-torments, but yet thought they would be long, and terrible.

The third division, believe, that there is *one* living and true God, and beside him there is none else,

That Jesus Christ, was *a man born from man*, but commissioned by God, to preach deliverance to the captive, to bring to light, the doctrine of an immortal and imperishable state of happiness and holiness, and to promulgate the truth of the "restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

They disbelieve in devils or fallen angels, and profess, and preach that God will by no means clear the guilty, that he will certainly punish evil doers, and richly reward those who walk humbly before him.

These are the most common of the opinions of these people, as far as we know them, there may be others with which we are unacquainted.

Far be it from us to say to any of those who believe not with the established church, "stand off, we are holier than thou," no! it would be assuming a language too presuming for the frail lips of man, therefore, whilst they continue to walk in the footsteps of our Lord and Saviour, they have our hand in this earthly pilgrimage, for their religious opinions they are only answerable to their God, for to their own master they stand or fall. Let us then putting aside the non-essentials of religion, only endeavour, and encourage all without distinction of name or

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party, to let that glorious light which has emanated from our God, so shine before men, that they seeing our good works may "glorify our Father who is in heaven," always remembering that mark which our Lord impressed on his disciples whereby they might be known in every land, a *mark* founded on an imperishable basis, which shall endure in all countries, and remain through all ages a living monument, which needs neither rite, nor ceremony, nor fanciful decoration, which was thus described, "Hereby shall men *know*, that ye are my disciples, if ye *have love* one to another."

We would here pause and describe that storm which assailed the principles of our religion, in France, the waves dashed at the feet of its column, and the anarchy of the moral world, usurped the seat of reason. The sabbath was abolished, religion was trampled on—Ah! in the intoxication of a dreadful moment, men dared even to doubt of the existence of a God, and set up idols. Heavy, awfully so, has been the consequence, the thought of the woes of that unfortunate people, the terrors of the guillotine, and the tread of the hostile foe within their capital, seems like the iron entering the soul.—Let darkness brood upon that eventful period, and we never remember it, but when it is necessary to humble our pride, to bow our reason at the foot of the cross, and to warn us, that no intellect however superior, no morality however esteemed, no reputation however high, can secure us from the headlong fall of ruin, if we lose a reverence for God. Let us all remember that the heart is deceitful and it is necessary often to say "take heed how thou standest."

Christian Messenger.

Philadelphia, Saturday, November 4, 1820.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

MR. EDITOR,

I have been induced to send the following observations, for insertion in the Christian Messenger, from having perused an article in No. 11, signed Q. on Ceremonies in Religion. The writer of that article in the course of his essay, states that "a Religion entirely

divested of ceremony, where the spirit of the worshipper mounts immediately to the throne of heaven, and communes with its God in devotion abstracted from aught earthly or corrupt, is certainly the most grand and sublime, and most worthy of the majesty of our heavenly Father." In this sentiment I perfectly concur; for such I conceive to be the religion of Jesus, devoid of all outward ceremony, and of every thing that can shield hypocrisy or tend to superstition and idolatry; but I cannot accord with him in wishing to cherish in the christian church, the ceremonies of baptism and the Lord's supper, or the practice of public worship (if by that is meant public social prayer, and singing;) because they form no part of christianity, and are calculated to produce hypocrisy, superstition and idolatry. If indeed it could be shewn that those, ceremonies formed an essential part of christianity, and were appointed by Jesus, then it would be the duty of every christian to observe them, but when no proof can be adduced of the ceremonies of baptism and the Lord's supper being appointed perpetual ordinances in the christian church, and when we have the uniform conduct of Jesus for our example as well as an express command, Matt. chap. vi. ver. 6. against the practice of public prayer, it ill becomes any man, or set of men, to lay their unhallowed hands on the fair form of christianity, to deface its beauty by the meretricious ornaments of ceremony, under the specious pretence of making it more attractive and acceptable to mankind. Deity has given unto man, through his servant Jesus, a perfect system of religion, divested of all outward ceremony, and calculated to produce the happiness of all, but man more wise than his maker, conceives it to be imperfect, and sets about amending it with the vain conceits of his own imagination. The introduction or existence of ceremonies in the christian church, is always to be deprecated on account of their superstitious and idolatrous tendency; they are calculated to lead the minds of men from their proper object, moral improvement and a conformity to the principles of religion in their conduct in the world, men are induced to put their trust in the observance of ceremonies, instead of practical religion, they substitute the

shadow for the substance, and degenerate from christians, to mere ceremonialists.

I am well aware of the plea set up by Q. that "a religion entirely divested of ceremony, is too exalted for the generality of mankind;" many others have advanced the same plea in order to support the observance of ceremonies, but it is a dangerous and fallacious expedient, to which may be traced the origin of most of the many absurd and idolatrous ceremonies that have inundated the christian church in different ages, it was from the eager desire of rendering the christian religion popular, by accommodating it to the gross conceptions of men instead of endeavouring to conform men to the religion of Jesus, that it became so enormously corrupted as we see it in the church of Rome, where all its original beauty and sublimity are swallowed up in the vortex of superstition; how unlike is this accommodating conduct to the conduct of Paul, who, though opposed by the combined prejudices of both Jews and Greeks, would yield to no accommodation, but would preach nothing but Christ crucified.

Q. says he views those ceremonies "as a means of conforming our faith, and cultivating religious feelings;" but if ceremonies have a strong tendency to lead the mind astray, and to generate superstition, no pretence can justify their introduction into a religious system, which is perfect without them, for who can set bounds to the evil, or say to what extent their influence may spread, by what means is their natural tendency to be obviated; is it to be by explaining on every occasion, that they are but mere forms and non-essentials, if so they will lose half their effect in confirming our faith, and cultivating religious feelings; and much greater good might be done by an exhortation to purity and holiness, or reasoning on the evidences of the truth of the christian religion, than can possibly be produced by immersion in water, or partaking of bread and wine. I cannot but express my surprise that a person like Q. who conceives so highly of a religion entirely divested of ceremony, as to consider it the most grand and sublime, and most worthy of the majesty of our heavenly father, should notwithstanding wish to cherish ceremonies in the

Christian church. Does he believe that the Christian dispensation, which has been considered the consummation of revelation, imperfect and not adapted to effect the purpose for which it was intended without the foreign aid of ceremonies which do not belong to the system, if he does not believe so, then his plea for the observance of ceremonies, in order to accommodate religion to the gross conceptions of mankind is very fallacious; a person like Q. who can penetrate through the mist of ceremonies, and knows its insubstantiality, instead of groping about amid the dark and dense vapour on account of his fellow-men not seeing so clear as himself, should step beyond it into the sunshine of unobscured truth, and endeavour to induce others to follow.

B.

Note. The original signature to the above was A, but as we have already one writer in the Messenger of that signature, we have taken the liberty to change it to B. believing that that will be equally acceptable to the writer.

EDITOR.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

The writer of "Brief Sketches," (which sketches in general are very satisfactory,) seems in some particulars to be more *brief* than we could have wished. The motives of introducing the reformation into England, if true, are not sufficiently apparent to have been so broadly asserted without proof; or at least, the circumstances alluded to should have been more explicitly stated. Our readers will not be disposed to believe (as they ought not to believe without evidence,) that in England the reformation "was introduced to *legalize adultery*, and to sanction the libertine address of royalty." When such broad assertions are made, unless their truth is very obvious, the circumstances alluded to should be made to appear, which in the present instance is not the case. See page 52.

The writer of the sketches is also called upon to show wherein Dr. Priestly has asserted that "Christ was the son of Joseph and Mary by the natural generation." We would not say but that such was Dr. Priestly's opinion, as it was undoubtedly the opinion of others in the earliest age of the church, yet we have no recollection of meeting with an *assertion* of the mod-

est and candid Doctor, on this subject. Yea, he was not in the habit of making assertions on any subject, unless it was when he had positive proof. A.

RELIGIOUS OPINIONS

MANY people are heard to say, if Universalism be true, I am safe let me believe what I will. To such as these it might be well to give a criterion by which they may be satisfied of the truth or falsity of their opinions. The bible speaks of "*joy and peace in believing*." Any belief then, which gives to the mind that heavenly joy and peace which are so characteristic of the Christian's submission to the will of God, which is to have all men to be saved, may be considered as the true one. Reader, does the belief of endless damnation give you "joy and peace?"

RICHARDS.

REMOVAL.

The Editor of the Christian Messenger has removed to No. 58 Chestnut street, where all communications in future are to be left.

NOTICE.

The Rev. Mr. Kneeland will commence his Tuesday evening Lectures, for the present season, on Tuesday evening next, at 7 o'clock precisely; and after the public service, there will be a meeting of the proprietors of the Christian Messenger; the proprietors are therefore particularly solicited to attend.

PROPOSALS

FOR PUBLISHING BY SUBSCRIPTION, A WORK

ENTITLED

A BRIEF HISTORY

OF THE

RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE DOCTRINE OF

UNIVERSAL SALVATION.

WITH A VIEW

OF THE PRESENT STATE OF THE UNIVERSALIST SOCIETIES IN EUROPE AND AMERICA.

PROSPECTUS.

THIS History will comprise a brief view of such writers as have asserted the doctrine of Universal Salvation,

from Origin, in the third century, to the present time; and the ideas and arguments of such authors will be exhibited in concise extracts from their works. It will embrace a view of some of the causes which contributed to promote the growth of the above doctrine in the United States. A chapter will be devoted to a history of the Convention of Universalist Societies, from its commencement to the present period. The present condition of the Societies will be exhibited, and compared with the situation, when known as distinct communities of Christians. The lives and characters of several of the most distinguished preachers of Universalism will be briefly delineated. Towards the conclusion, an account will be given of the state of Universalism in Europe.

This work has been undertaken, by direction of the General Convention of the Universalist Societies. The Committee to whom the compiling of this history was confided, have spared no pains, in endeavouring to collect the proper materials. There are still, however some deficiencies, which they have ground to hope will be supplied by the time the work can go to press; if they are not, they will proceed with the publication, (if the return of subscribers shall justify them in so doing,) with such data as they already possess.

HOSEA BALLOU,
EDWARD TURNER,
JACOB WOOD,

Committee for compiling the above work.

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CONDITIONS.

1. The work shall be put to press as soon as 1000 copies are subscribed for.
 2. It will contain about 250 pages, 12mo. printed on good paper, and a fair type.
 3. The price to Subscribers will be one dollar, handsomely bound.
- Subscriptions to be returned to either of the Committee, or to Mr. Henry Bowen, printer of the Universalist Magazine, Boston, by the 1st day of January, 1821.

Boston Sept. 16, 1820.

(P) Subscriptions for the above work will be received by the Editor, or by the carrier of this paper.